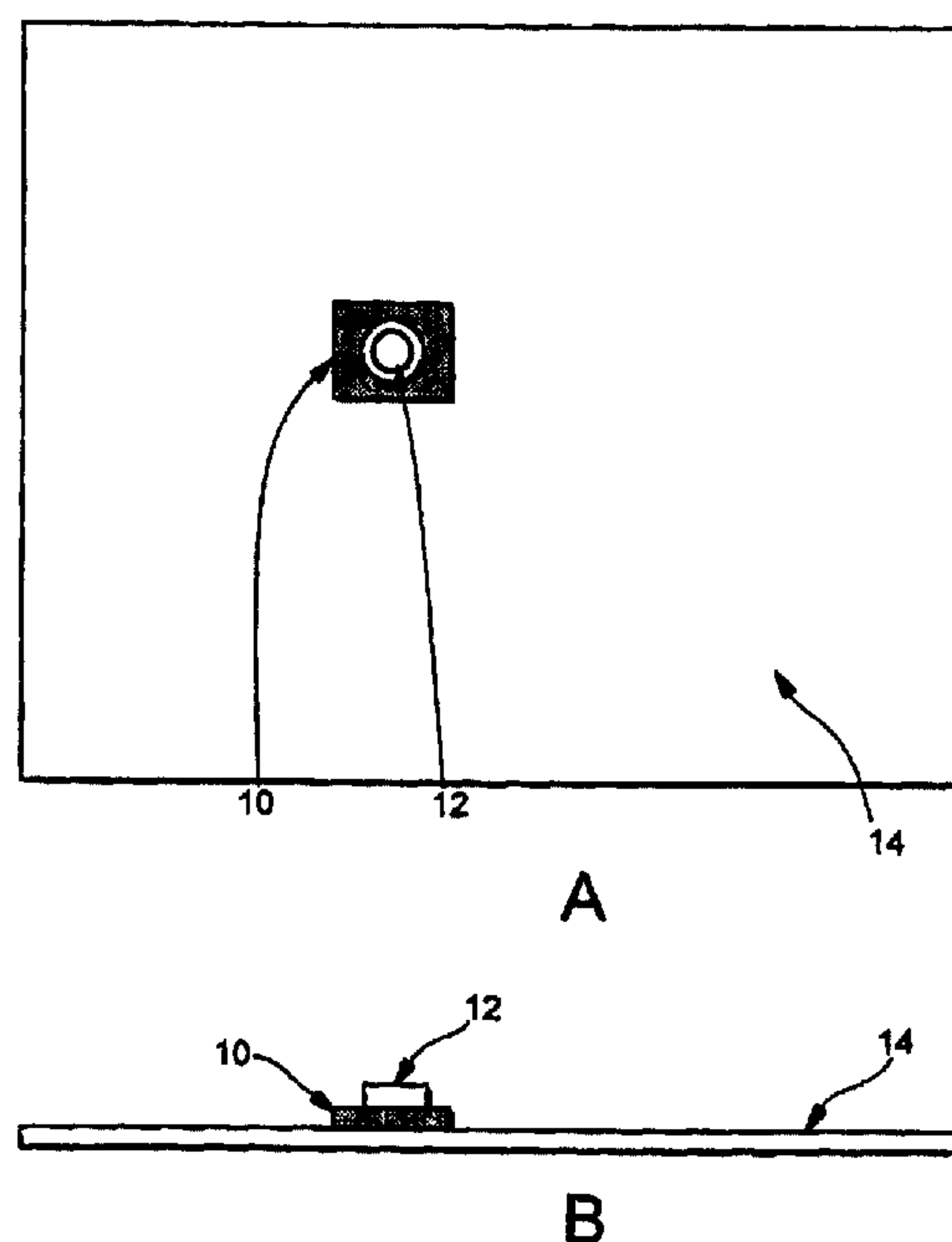




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(51) Int.Cl.<sup>7</sup> H04R 1/00  
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(54) **HAUT-PARLEUR A PANNEAUX**  
(54) **PANEL-FORM LOUDSPEAKERS**



(57) L'invention a trait à un haut-parleur à panneaux. Ce haut-parleur comporte au moins deux panneaux acoustiques fonctionnant en mode résonnant réparti. Il est doté d'une seule unité de commande destinée à exciter tous les panneaux de telle manière que l'énergie de l'onde de flexion soit transmise efficacement à chacun de ces panneaux aux fins d'exciter leur résonance en mode réparti et ce, dans le but de provoquer une sortie acoustique. Le haut-parleur peut comporter deux panneaux, l'un étant plus grand que l'autre, le plus grand

(57) A panel-form loudspeaker comprises at least two resonant distributed mode acoustic panels with a single driver provided to excite all the panels such that bending wave energy is efficiently transferred to each of them to excite distributed mode resonance in them to provide acoustic output. There may be two panels one larger than the other - the larger having a lower bending wave stiffness than the smaller. The smaller panel is positioned eccentrically of the larger and the driver eccentrically of the smaller panel. A plurality of smaller panels may be



présentant une rigidité d'onde de flexion inférieure à celle du petit. Le petit panneau est positionné de manière excentrique par rapport au grand panneau. L'unité de commande est positionnée de manière excentrique par rapport au petit panneau. Une pluralité de petits panneaux peuvent être associés à un seul grand panneau. Selon un mode réalisation, une unité de commande montée sur le petit panneau, ou sur chaque petit panneau, est fixée par la voie adhésive, face à face par rapport au grand panneau. Selon un autre mode réalisation, le petit panneau, ou chaque petit panneau, est formé à l'intérieur du grand panneau et fixé sur celui-ci, une unité de commande étant fixée au petit panneau, ou à chaque petit panneau. La fixation des panneaux nécessite l'utilisation d'une matière formant un couplage de commande adapté. Selon un troisième mode de réalisation, le petit panneau, ou chaque petit panneau, est fixé au niveau d'une extrémité d'un coupleur associé traversant le grand panneau, et fixé sur celui-ci, une unité de commande étant fixée au niveau de l'autre extrémité du coupleur, ou de chaque coupleur. La fixation du coupleur, ou de chaque coupleur, au grand panneau nécessite l'utilisation d'une matière formant un couplage de commande adapté. Le coupleur, ou chaque coupleur, présente une coupe transversale tubulaire.

associated with a single larger panel. One embodiment provides a driver mounted to the or each smaller panel which is adhesively attached face to face to the larger panel. Another embodiment provides the or each smaller panel formed within and attached to the larger panel, a driver being attached to the or each smaller panel. The attachment of the panels uses a material forming a controlling compliant coupling. A third embodiment provides the or each smaller panel mounted on one end of an associated coupler passing through and attached to the larger panel, a driver being attached to the other end of the or each coupler. The attachment of the or each coupler to the larger panel uses a material forming a controlling compliance coupling. The or each coupler is tubular in section.

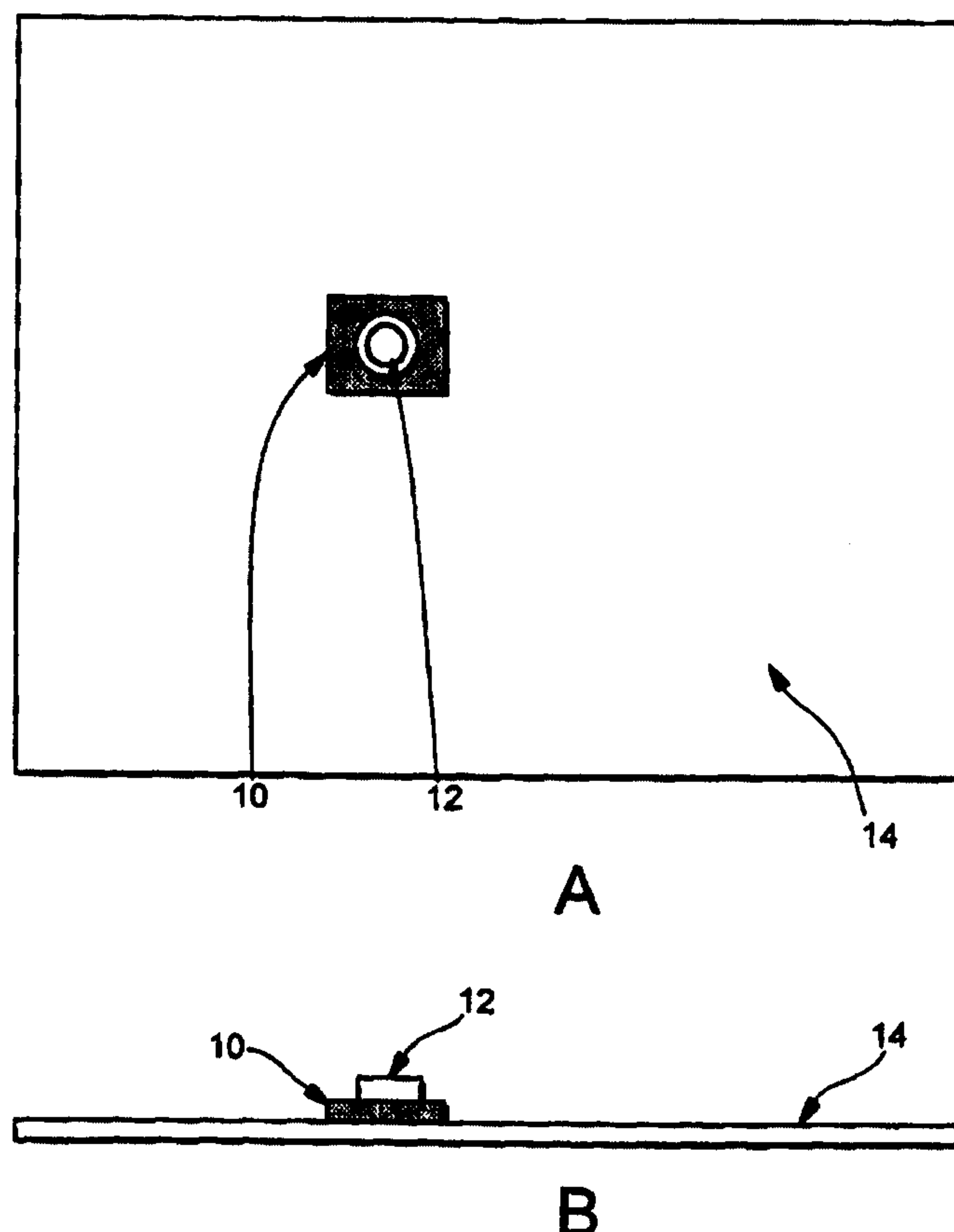
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| <b>(21) International Application Number:</b> PCT/GB98/01362<br><b>(22) International Filing Date:</b> 13 May 1998 (13.05.98)<br><b>(30) Priority Data:</b><br>9709959.2                      15 May 1997 (15.05.97)                      GB<br><b>(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US):</b> NEW TRANS-<br>DUCERS LIMITED [GB/GB]; Stonehill, Huntingdon, Cam-<br>bridgeshire PE18 6E (GB).<br><b>(72) Inventors; and</b><br><b>(75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only):</b> AZIMA, Henry [CA/GB];<br>3 Southacre Close, Chaucer Road, Cambridge CB2 2TT<br>(GB). ELLIS, Christien [GB/GB]; Briar Cottage, 3 Bar-<br>ley Road, Great Chishill, Hertfordshire SG8 8SB (GB).<br>HARRIS, Neil [GB/GB]; 9 Davey Crescent, Great Shelford,<br>Cambridge CB2 5JF (GB).<br><b>(74) Agent:</b> MAGUIRE BOSS; 5 Crown Street, St. Ives, Cam-<br>bridgeshire PE17 4EB (GB). |           | <b>(81) Designated States:</b> AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR,<br>BY, CA, CH, CN, CU, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, GB, GE,<br>GH, GM, GW, HU, ID, IL, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ,<br>LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW,<br>MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL,<br>TJ, TM, TR, TT, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZW, ARIPO<br>patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, SD, SZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian<br>patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European<br>patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR,<br>IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF,<br>CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).<br><br><b>Published</b><br><i>Without international search report and to be republished<br/>         upon receipt of that report.</i> |

**(54) Title:** PANEL-FORM LOUDSPEAKERS**(57) Abstract**

A panel-form loudspeaker comprises at least two resonant distributed mode acoustic panels with a single driver provided to excite all the panels such that bending wave energy is efficiently transferred to each of them to excite distributed mode resonance in them to provide acoustic output. There may be two panels one larger than the other – the larger having a lower bending wave stiffness than the smaller. The smaller panel is positioned eccentrically of the larger and the driver eccentrically of the smaller panel. A plurality of smaller panels may be associated with a single larger panel. One embodiment provides a driver mounted to the or each smaller panel which is adhesively attached face to face to the larger panel. Another embodiment provides the or each smaller panel formed within and attached to the larger panel, a driver being attached to the or each smaller panel. The attachment of the panels uses a material forming a controlling compliant coupling. A third embodiment provides the or each smaller panel mounted on one end of an associated coupler passing through and attached to the larger panel, a driver being attached to the other end of the or each coupler. The attachment of the or each coupler to the larger panel uses a material forming a controlling compliance coupling. The or each coupler is tubular in section.



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TITLE: PANEL-FORM LOUDSPEAKERS

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DESCRIPTIONFIELD OF THE INVENTION

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The invention relates to panel-form loudspeakers, and more particularly, but not exclusively, to panel-form loudspeakers of the kind described in our International Application WO97/09842 and known as distributed mode loudspeakers.

20

BACKGROUND ART

In theory and given the availability of the right materials, a distributed mode loudspeaker can cover the full audio range in a single panel. Since the current state of the art in materials technology precludes such a solution, our International Application WO/9709846  
25 envisages small distributed mode loudspeaker panel suspended in a larger distributed mode loudspeaker panel of lower cut-off frequency to produce a wider acoustic

bandwidth loudspeaker. This requires at least two exciters of appropriate type and also requires careful design of the mechanical interface between the two panels.

5 As both panels cover a wide frequency range within their individual capabilities, there will also be a broad frequency range within which the outputs of the two panels may overlap. An electrical cross-over network may therefore be desirable, although it may tend to degrade  
10 the sound quality and will add to the manufacturing cost.

An object of the invention is to provide arrangements which alleviate or overcome these difficulties.

#### GENERAL ASPECTS OF THE INVENTION

15 In one aspect the invention provides a panel-form loudspeaker comprising at least two resonant distributed mode acoustic panels wherein a single driver is provided to excite all of said panels such that bending wave energy is efficiently transferred to each of them to  
20 excite distributed mode resonance in them to provide acoustic output.

Desirably, there are two panels and one of said panels may be larger than the other.

The larger of said panels preferably has a lower  
25 bending wave stiffness than the smaller.

The smaller of said panels is desirably positioned eccentrically with respect to the larger panel.

The driver is desirably positioned eccentrically

with respect to the smaller of said panels.

In one embodiment a plurality of smaller panels are associated with a single larger panel.

Advantageously, a driver is mounted to the or each  
5 smaller panel which is attached to the larger panel, the attachment being such that bending wave energy from the or each driver and its associated smaller panel is efficiently transferred to the larger panel.

Preferably the smaller and larger panels are  
10 attached together face to face. The panels may be secured together by means of an adhesive of low mechanical loss.

In another embodiment the or each smaller panel is formed within and attached to the larger panel, a driver being attached to the or each smaller panel.

15 The attachment of the smaller and larger panels may be effected with a material forming a controlling compliant coupling.

In yet another embodiment the or each smaller panel is mounted on one end of an associated coupler passing  
20 through and attached to the larger panel, a driver being attached to the or each said coupler.

The driver(s) is preferably attached to the other end of the or each coupler.

The attachment of the or each coupler to the larger  
25 panel desirably makes use of a material forming a controlling compliance coupling.

The or each coupler is preferably tubular in section.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The above aspects, features and advantages of the invention will become apparent from the following description of embodiments of the invention now made with  
5 reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

Figure 1 shows at A and B respectively rear face and side views of a first panel-form loudspeaker embodying the invention,

Figure 2 is a sectional side view of a second panel-  
10 form loudspeaker embodying the invention,

Figure 3 is a sectional side view of a third panel-form loudspeaker embodying the present invention, and

Figure 4 is a rear face view of a modified form of the loudspeakers shown in Figure 1 to 3.

15 BEST MODES FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

Figure 1 shows a smaller distributed mode loudspeaker panel (10) driven by an appropriate driver or exciter (12), preferably an electro-dynamic type for greater bandwidth. The smaller panel (10) is attached  
20 face to face to a larger distributed mode loudspeaker panel (14) of appropriately lower stiffness and of dimensions appropriate to cover the required lower frequency range. By the choice of the right materials and driver design it can be shown that when the smaller  
25 panel (10) is driven it will continue to produce its useful bandwidth superimposed on the lower range frequency output resulting from the larger panel (14) giving a much wider bandwidth.

The smaller distributed mode loudspeaker panel (10) may be attached to the larger one by application of suitable adhesives of low mechanical loss in order to maintain efficient transfer of mechanical energy at low frequencies as well as maintaining good high frequency transmissibility with little loss. Epoxy resin adhesives are suitable for this purpose. The position of attachment of the smaller panel (10) to the larger panel (14) will be chosen in accordance with the distributed mode principle as explained in our International Application WO/97/09842, as will the position of attachment of the exciter (12) to the smaller panel (10).

Figure 2 illustrates another type of panel-form loudspeaker embodying the invention in which a larger, low frequency optimised distributed mode panel (20) is modified by having a smaller, high frequency optimised panel (22) formed in the region of a driver (24). The common driving point of the driver (24) means that both parts or regions of the panel are excited. The smaller, high frequency part or region of the panel is provided by extra stiffening of the local skin region (26) for example by adding bonded carbon fibre, glass fibre or similar high strength material. Alternatively, by adding new higher stiffness skin sections in that region. Depending upon the wave propagation properties of the larger panel (20) a natural balance of power division with frequency may be obtained. Additionally a suitable compliant boundary (28) is incorporated to

differentiate between the high and lower frequency parts of the panel. Control of the compliance frequency dependent damping of the resilient coupling allows the ideal or preferred cross-over point to be determined mechanically together with beneficial control of the damping at the boundary between the two parts of the panel.

Figure 3 illustrates yet another type of panel-form loudspeaker embodying the invention. In the arrangement of Figure 3 a smaller, high frequency, panel (30) is adhesively fixed to one end of a light weight tubular coupler (32). Coupler passes through a larger, low frequency panel (34) and is resiliently attached to it as shown at (36). The resilient attachment of the coupler to the larger panel (34) acts as a mechanical low pass filter to further define the balance of energy between the two panels (30 and 34). It can be seen that the end of the coupler (32) spaced from the high frequency panel (30) is fixed to a driver exciter (38).

Yet another arrangement embodying the invention is illustrated in Figure 4 where a single large resonant distributed mode acoustic panel (50) has associated with it a number of smaller panels (52) each having an associated driver (54). The smaller panels (52) may be associated with the larger panel (50) in the ways described with reference to Figures 1 to 3. That is to say the smaller panel (52) may be adhesively attached face to face to the larger panel (50) and have mounted

thereon its own driver (54). Alternatively, the smaller panels (52) may comprise a number of sections of the larger panel (50) which have been appropriately stiffened and provided with an individual driver (54) - the  
5 stiffened sections (52) being coupled to the larger panel in the manner described with reference to Figure 2. Lastly, the smaller panels (52) may comprise panels carried by couplers each associated with an individual driver in the manner described with reference to Figure  
10 3. It will be appreciated that the smaller panels (52) in the arrangement of Figure 4 need not all be associated with the larger panel (50) in the same way. Some may be associated in the way described with reference to Figure 1 whilst others are associated in the way described with  
15 reference to Figures 2 and/or 3.

In the described embodiments the driver is in each case attached or coupled to a smaller panel, it will of course be appreciated that the driver may be attached or coupled to the larger of the panels if desired.

#### 20 INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

The distributed mode loudspeakers described have the benefits of enabling full audio bandwidth from one loudspeaker and reducing the number of drivers required and therefore the cost and complexity of the  
25 loudspeakers.

A loudspeaker in accordance with the present invention may be applied to an automobile headliner, with the benefit of a reduced component count, which results

WO 98/52381

PCT/GB98/01362

8

in higher reliability, no need for electrical cross-over components, and reduced manufacturing costs.

CLAIMS

1. A panel-form loudspeaker comprising at least two bending wave resonant distributed mode acoustic panels, including a larger panel and a smaller panel, wherein both  
5 the larger and smaller panels are excited by a single driver arranged such that bending wave energy is efficiently transferred to both of the larger and smaller panels to excite distributed mode resonance in the larger and smaller panels to provide acoustic output.
- 10 2. A panel-form loudspeaker according to Claim 1, wherein the larger panel has a lower bending wave stiffness than the smaller.
3. A panel-form loudspeaker according to Claim 1 or Claim 2, wherein the smaller panel is positioned eccentrically  
15 with respect to the larger panel.
4. A panel-form loudspeaker as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein said driver is positioned eccentrically with respect to the smaller of said panels.
5. A panel-form loudspeaker according to claim 1, having  
20 further smaller panels, each having an associated driver arranged such that bending wave energy is efficiently transferred to both the smaller panel associated with the driver and the larger panel to excite distributed mode resonance in the panels to provide acoustic output.
- 25 6. A panel-form loudspeaker according to Claim 1, wherein there are exactly two panels.
7. A panel-form loudspeaker as claimed in any one of

AMENDED SHEET

claims 1 to 5, wherein a driver is mounted to the or each smaller panel which is attached to the larger panel, the attachment being such that bending wave energy from the or each driver and its associated smaller panel is efficiently transferred to the larger panel.

8. A panel-form loudspeaker as claimed in Claim 7, wherein the or each smaller panel is attached to the larger panel face to face.

9. A panel-form loudspeaker as claimed in Claim 7 or Claim 8, wherein the panels are secured together by means of an adhesive of low mechanical loss.

10. A panel-form loudspeaker as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the or each smaller panel is formed within and attached to the larger panel, a driver being attached to the or each smaller panel.

11. A panel-form loudspeaker as claimed in Claim 10, wherein the attachment of the smaller and larger panels is effected with a material forming a controlling compliant coupling.

12. A panel-form loudspeaker as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6, comprising a coupler passing through and attached to the larger panel, the smaller panel being mounted on one end of the coupler, and the driver associated with the smaller panel being attached to drive the coupler.

13. A panel form loudspeaker as claimed in Claim 12, wherein the driver is attached to the end of the coupler

opposite to the end attached to the corresponding smaller panel.

14. A panel-form loudspeaker as claimed in Claim 12 or Claim 13, wherein the attachment of the coupler to the  
5 larger panel makes use of a material forming a controlling compliance coupling.

15. A panel-form loudspeaker as claimed in any one of claims 12 to 14, wherein the coupler is tubular in section.

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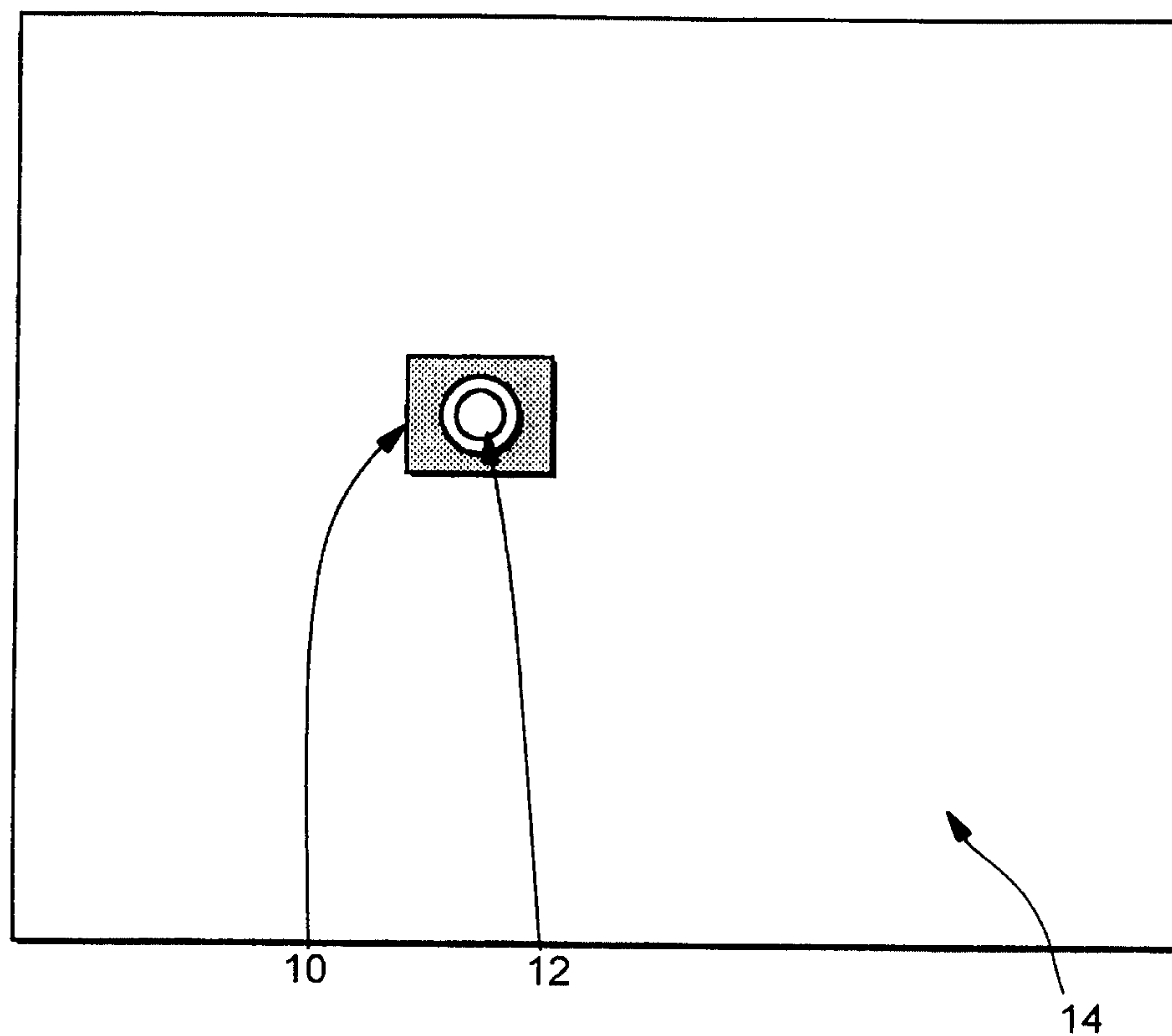


FIG. 1A

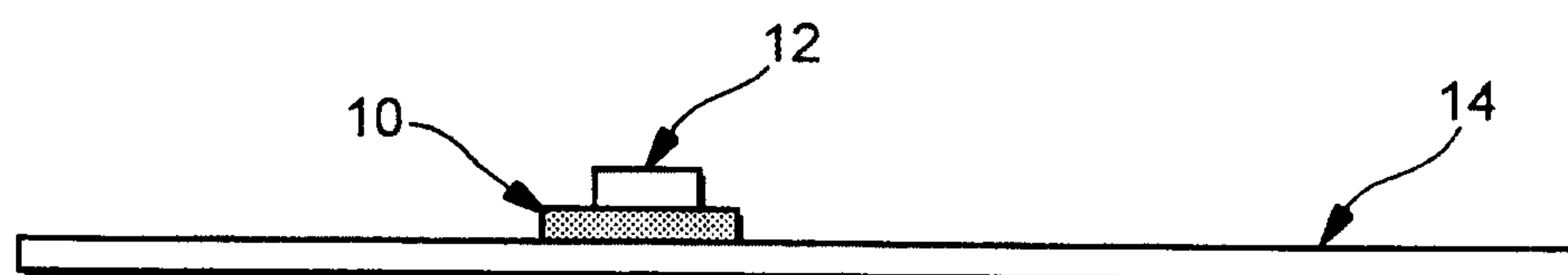


FIG. 1B

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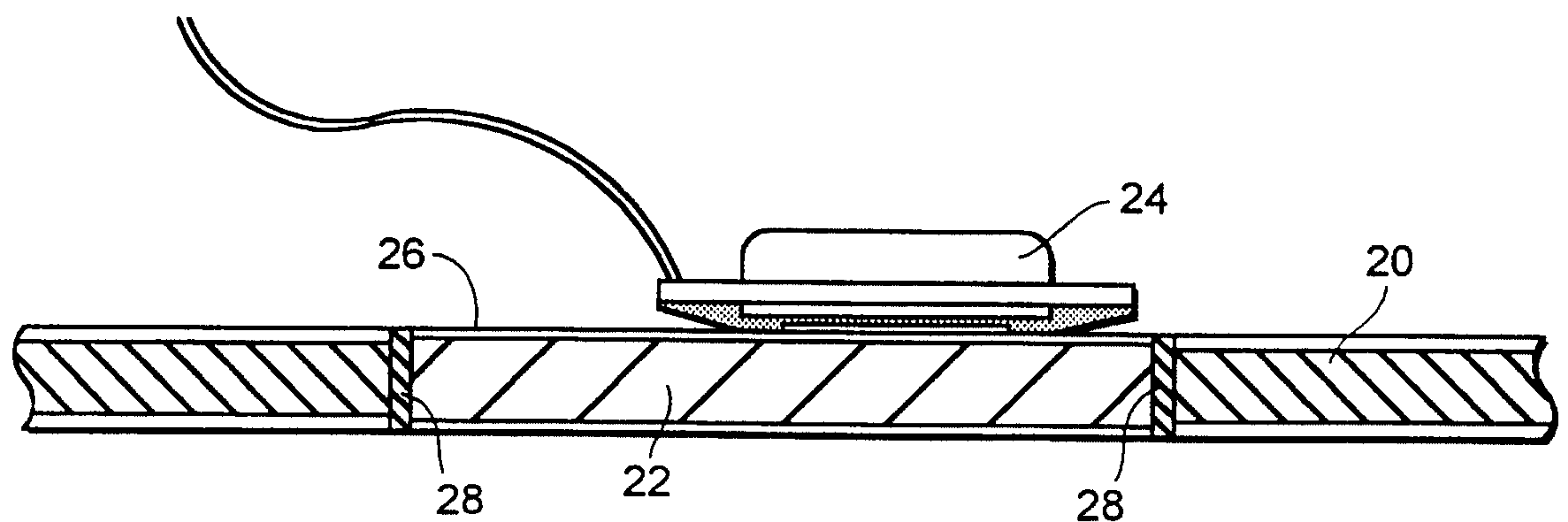


FIG. 2

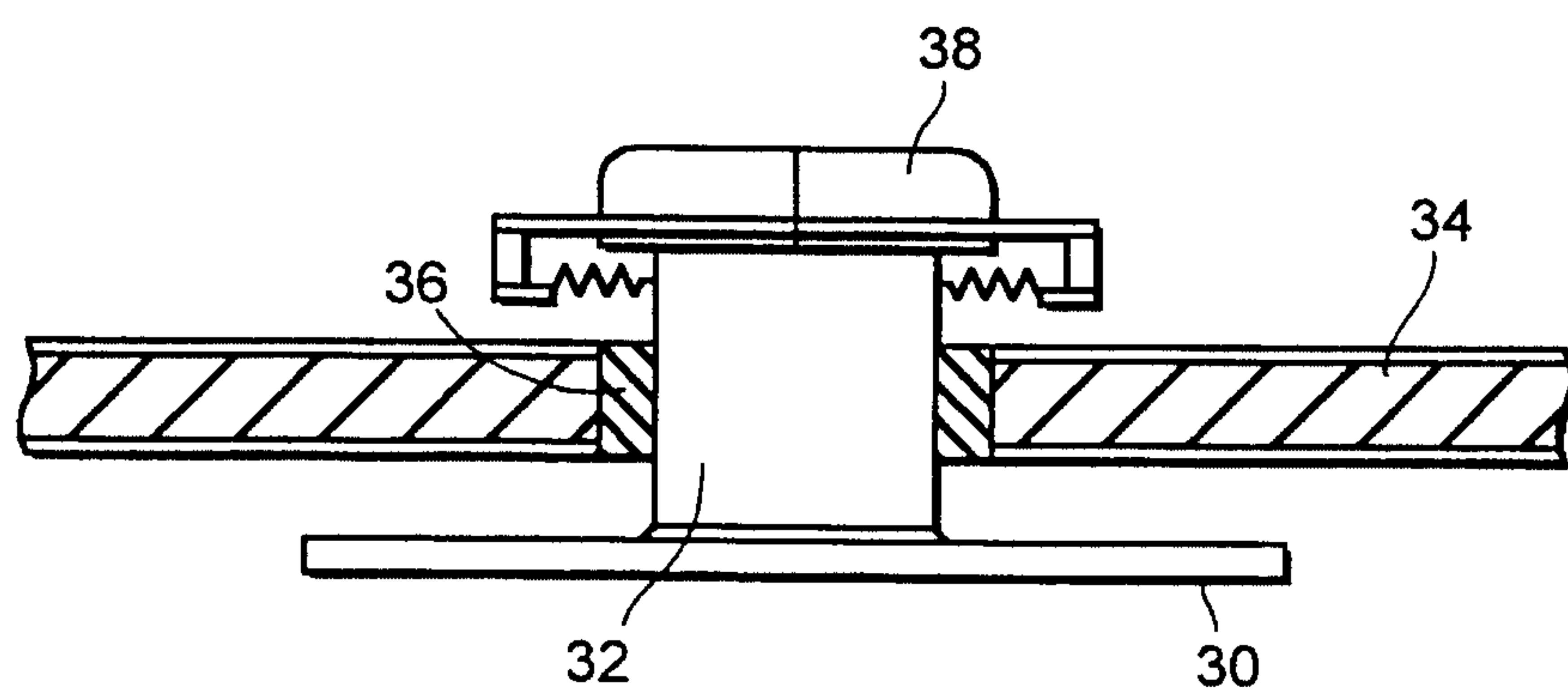


FIG. 3

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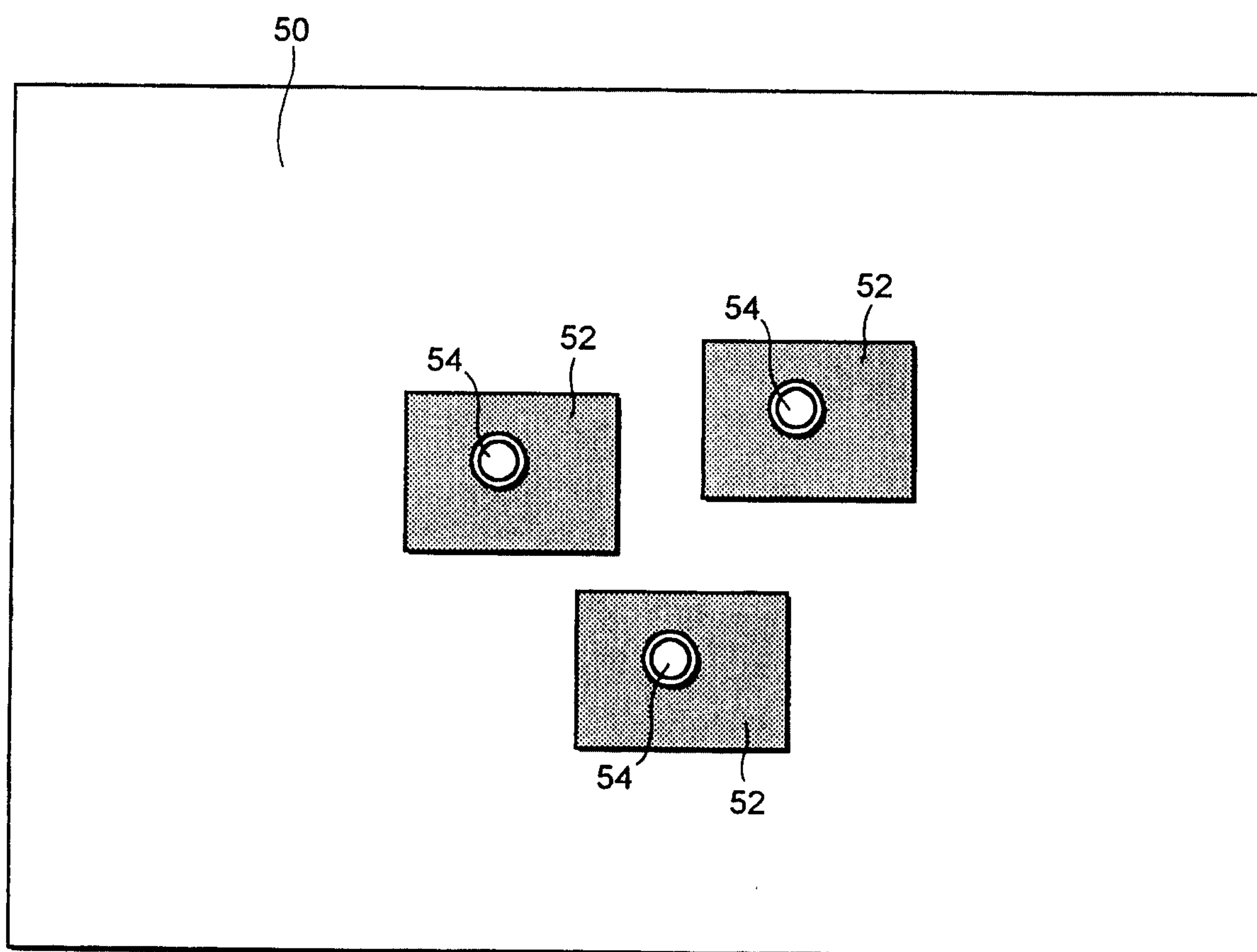


FIG. 4